

MINUTES OF THE
SYBIL BRAND COMMISSION FOR INSTITUTIONAL INSPECTIONS
MONTHLY BUSINESS MEETING
FEBRUARY 16, 2005

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Montano called the meeting to order at 10:08 a.m.

OPENING CEREMONIES

Chair Montano led the pledge of allegiance followed by a moment of silence.

ATTENDANCE

Present:

Chair Eleanor R. Montano
Vice Chair Helen H. Stathatos
Frank Bacio
Vito Cannella
John Hammargren
Carl Moore

Absent

James Cragin
Michael Russell

Others Present

Sergeant Victor Lopez, Sheriff's
Department
Liz Howard, DCFS, Unit Manager
Quality Assurance Division
Carla Carr, Children's Group Home
Ombudsman, Auditor-Controller
Office
Sonya Vasquez-Gomez, DCFS,
CSW III
Cheryl Epps, DCFS, CSA I
B. Eugene Romig, Chief, Commission
Services
Lee Millen, Senior Staff,
Commission Services
Sherry Scates, Commission Staff

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 9, 2005

On motion of Commissioner Hammargren, seconded by Commissioner Bacio and unanimously carried, the minutes of February 9, 2005 were approved with the following addition:

Page 2, Facility/Group Inspection Reports, Tana Group Home II, second Paragraph, prior to “A re-inspection is scheduled...” add the following sentence: *Additionally, Commissioners were advised by the facility staff that they were currently undergoing a Fiscal Audit and were having to “work extra hard to meet the audit conditions”. Commissioners had requested that the Auditor-Controller’s Office perform a Fiscal Audit of the Tana Group Homes I and II because of the unacceptable conditions that they observed during their latest inspection. **A re-inspection is scheduled in two months.***

CHAIR’S REPORT

Chair Montano reported that on February 15th, she attended a very informative conference hosted by the L.A. County Office of Education. The conference was well attended by a variety of Community and County agencies, including law enforcement. She had the opportunity to speak with law enforcement representatives regarding group/foster homes and the types of trouble calls the departments receive. Also, she spoke with the LACOE representative that is responsible for monitoring the education of juveniles placed in the County group/foster home system; a meeting with the LACOE representative will be scheduled and a status report will follow.

TREASURER’S REPORT

Commissioner Bacio reported that the balance of the Commission’s Charitable Fund is \$725.96.

STAFF REPORT

Sherry Scates, Commission Staff, reported the following:

- Copies of the Probation List of Closed Homes were distributed (copy on file);
- Registration information and driving directions were distributed to Chair Montano, Vice Chair Stathatos and Commissioner Bacio for the Aviva Children and Family Conference on February 17th; and
- Rex White, Regional Administrator, DCFS, faxed a confirmation of the Commission’s planned presentation to the DCFS Regional Administrators Meeting at 9:00 a.m. on Wednesday, March 16th. Chair Montano and Commissioner Moore will make the presentation and Sherry Scates, Commission Staff, will take notes.

Lee Millen, Senior Staff, Commission Services, reported that the name plates on order should be available by the next Commission meeting.

CORRESPONDENCE

There was none.

DEPARTMENT UPDATES ON FACILITY OPERATIONS

- **Sheriff's Department:** Sergeant Victor Lopez distributed copies of the Sheriff's Custody Division Total Inmate Count (copy on file) and a January 27, 2005, Sheriff's Department memo regarding security upgrades to the Pomona South Court, which Commissioners had requested following the fatal shooting of CHP Officer Thomas Steiner. A brief discussion followed regarding Sheriff's Department facility operations.
- **Probation Department:** No representative was present.
- **Department of Children and Family Services:** Liz Howard, Unit Manager, DCFS Quality Assurance Division; Sonya Vasquez-Gomez, CSW III, Emergency Response Placement, and Cheryl Epps, CSA I, contributed valuable information and insight into DCFS group/foster home policies and procedures. Ms. Howard advised that DCFS is currently undergoing a comprehensive restructuring and that her Division is transitioning from the investigation of group/foster homes to a performance based outcome protocol which focuses on the safety, performance and well being of out-of-home placement youth. The group/foster home inspection duties will be handled by the County's Emergency Response Social Workers and will respond to the Child Abuse Hotline referrals.

Ms. Gomez gave a brief overview of her Division's responsibilities. As of January 2005, the DCFS Emergency Care Placement system has 23 emergency placement homes, a total of 68 beds, and can accommodate a placement of from 1 to 14 days; however, Ms. Gomez noted that the majority of placements are of an overnight duration because the child is either returned to the parents or a responsible relative was located. Commissioners were informed that they can review a child's "Needs and Service Plan" if Commissioners feel that the child's individual needs are not being met. Commission staff was instructed to add "Needs and Service Plan" to the Commission's inspection form.

- **Auditor-Controller's Office:** Carla Carr, Children's Group Home Ombudsman, presented an overview of the Auditor-Controller's monitoring process of out-of-home care facilities and offered valuable input throughout the meeting.

- **Department of Social Services:** No representative was present.

Commissioners thanked the department representatives for their invaluable participation and their knowledgeable responses. Commissioners expressed their sincere desire to assist the departments in their mutual goal of ensuring the safety and well being of the out-of-home placement youth.

FACILITY/GROUP INSPECTION REPORTS

Ladora's Family Services – 62#1

Chair Montano and Commissioner Hammargren visited this facility on February 10th and found that this facility had been closed.

Dimondale Adolescent Care Facility – Probation

Chair Montano and Commissioner Hammargren inspected this facility on February 14th and gave a rating of **Satisfactory**. Area of concern: No evacuation plan in place or posted. A list was distributed of the facility staff procedures to be followed, and the required protocols on the consequences for unacceptable conduct at school, and for being AWOL.

P & J Children's Foundation (Falls Grove) – 83#3

Chair Montano confirmed that this facility has been closed.

Street Academy II – 101#3

Chair Montano and Commissioner Hammargren inspected this facility on February 10th and found no one at home.

Turmont Home for Boys/Carson – 108#1

Chair Montano and Commissioner Hammargren inspected this facility on February 14th and found no one at home.

Camp Karl Holton – Probation

Vice Chair Stathatos and Commissioner Cannella inspected this facility on February 10th and gave a rating of **Satisfactory**. Area of concern: Commissioners noted that the "C" Dorm showers needed to be refurbished and were advised by camp staff that the showers are almost 50 years old.

Phoenix House - 88#3

Vice Chair Stathatos and Commissioner Cannella inspected this facility on February 14th and gave a rating of **Satisfactory+** with no areas of concern

observed or reported. Commissioners noted that the refrigerator needed to be defrosted.

Michelle Travis – 69#3

Vice Chair Stathatos and Commissioner Cannella inspected this facility on February 15th and no one answered the doorbell; although it was evident that someone was at home.

NEW BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair Montano assigned inspection duties to Commissioners for the following week.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was none.

MATTERS NOT ON THE AGENDA (To be presented and placed on a future agenda)

There were none.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chair Montano adjourned the meeting at 12:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sherry Scates

Commission Staff